

Clarke County



PLANNING COMMISSION SITE PLAN COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 21, 2016

A meeting of the Planning Commission Site Plan Committee was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Monday, March 21, 2016.

ATTENDANCE

Robina Bouffault, Cliff Nelson, Anne Caldwell, and Frank Lee

Absent: None

Staff Present: Ryan Fincham (Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator); Brandon Stidham (Planning Director); Alison Teetor (Natural Resources Planner)

Others Present: Jeremy Tweedie and Bill Beran (Greenway Engineering); Patti Shorr – via telephone (Hecate Energy, LLC)

CALLED TO ORDER

Staff called the meeting to order at 3:00PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

Yes: Bouffault, Lee, Nelson (moved), Caldwell (seconded)

No: No one

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee voted to approve the February 19, 2016 minutes as presented.

Yes: Bouffault (moved), Lee, Nelson (seconded), Caldwell

No: No one

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

a. SUP-16-01/SP-16-01, Hecate Energy, LLC

Mr. Stidham informed the members that revised plans and supporting documentation was submitted prior to the filing deadline by the Applicant. He also introduced the members to Patti Shorr (Hecate Energy, LLC) who was participating via telephone. Mr. Tweedie provided an overview of the revised plans.

Mr. Lee asked about the speed limit on Highland Corners Road. Mr. Tweedie replied that he thought it was 25 MPH or less and he added that there is 280 feet of sight distance at the proposed property entrance. Mr. Lee asked if the speed limit is posted and Mr. Tweedie said he did not know. Mr. Lee added that non-posted roads have speed limits of 55MPH, and Mr. Stidham noted that he thought the state law on this had changed recently. Regarding the encroachment of the entrance on the adjoining property, Mr. Stidham said that he will be recommending a special use permit condition to require recordation of an ingress/egress easement to resolve the encroachment before a land disturbance permit is issued.

Mr. Tweedie reviewed the phasing plan that was added to the site plan, noting that the project is being phased to account for the required 10MW that must be completed by the end of the calendar year. Ms. Caldwell asked if Hecate knows when the second 10MW would be purchased and constructed. Ms. Shorr said it is in their interest to build both projects at the same time and that they would construct the second phase as soon as they can. Mr. Stidham added that Staff will likely recommend a special use permit condition to require all landscaping to be installed in conjunction with Phase 1.

Mr. Lee asked about Anderson & Associates Staff's note about compliance with the County stormwater ordinance. Mr. Tweedie replied that they rewrote the stormwater narrative to elaborate on how they address the County's requirements. He also noted that DEQ staff indicated that they may not be able to provide a formal response on their stormwater review until April 19. Mr. Lee asked how impervious area is calculated. Mr. Tweedie said that he included the skid pads and the post installation areas, noting that DEQ has requested a different methodology on the posts. Mr. Stidham said that DEQ's delay in reviewing the stormwater plan will have a big impact on whether this case is ready to move forward in the review process. Ms. Caldwell asked when the submission deadline for the May meeting is and Mr. Stidham replied that it is Friday, April 22.

Mr. Stidham noted that in regards to outdoor lighting, the Applicant indicates that they will provide a lighting plan after Hecate has selected a contractor. He noted that the ordinance requires the lighting plan to be submitted with the site plan. Ms. Shorr said that the lighting would be limited to motion-detecting security lighting at the property entrance. Mr. Tweedie clarified that the County ordinance requires details on the fixture and photometrics that could be provided via manufacturer specification sheets.

At this point, Ms. Shorr left the meeting.

Mr. Tweedie reviewed Hecate's counter-proposal for the ongoing monitoring of solution activity on site as recommended by the County's Karst engineer, Dan Rom. Mr. Stidham said that he has forwarded the counter-proposal to Mr. Rom for review and comment. Mr. Tweedie added that the first five years from construction is the most important time to monitor for Karst activity. Ms. Caldwell noted that monitoring should begin after completion of Phase 1 and continue annually until five years after completion of Phase 2 to account for the Applicant's construction phasing. Mr. Lee noted that Clarke County does not allow capping of wells and that an abandonment process must be followed.

Mr. Tweedie noted that an unlit project location sign has been added to the site plan. He said that this sign is optional and may or may not be added.

Mr. Stidham noted that Staff would likely recommend a special use permit condition prohibiting blasting on site. Mr. Tweedie asked if blasting is prohibited by the County or is a permit required.

Mr. Nelson asked for confirmation on the dimensions of the panels discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Tweedie replied that these dimensions may change depending on the manufacturer and that a manufacturer has not been selected by the Applicant yet. Mr. Stidham said that he advised the Applicant that if site plan changes are needed after a manufacturer is selected, this could result in additional delays to the project. He also advised the Applicant that Staff has very limited ability to approve changes to the site plan after it is approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Stidham stated that Dan Rom emailed Staff during the meeting and indicated that the Applicant's alternative monitoring approach for solution activity is acceptable.

Mr. Stidham and Mr. Tweedie discussed the potential need for bonding. Mr. Stidham noted that if the project is phased and items such as landscaping are deferred to the second phase, bonding would be required.

Ms. Teetor joined the meeting to discuss the County's blasting regulations. She said that if you are within 500 feet of wells, septic fields, or public water and sewer, you must submit a blasting plan for review that is acted on by the Board of Septic and Well Appeals. No blasting is allowed within 100 feet of such features. Mr. Stidham asked if the Applicant would be opposed to a condition that prohibits blasting, and Mr. Tweedie said that he would discuss it with the Applicant. Mr. Lee asked for additional information on the trenching for the electrical cabling.

Mr. Lee asked about the amount of noise that would be generated by installing the posts. Mr. Tweedie said that he would find out details but that there could be hours of operation established. Mr. Stidham said that he was contemplating a condition limiting construction to 8AM-6PM weekdays and asked Mr. Tweedie to advise the Applicant. Mr. Lee asked about the length of the construction process and Mr. Tweedie said 5-6 months. Mr. Stidham asked if this is for the full 20MW or just the first 10MW phase. Mr. Tweedie said he would check with the Applicant. Mr. Lee also asked about the angle of reflection from the panels and whether it could cause a problem for drivers on U.S. 522 at certain times of the day. Mr. Tweedie said that the proposed landscaping would help to diminish any reflectivity problems that may be caused by the panels. Ms. Bouffault stated that the panel manufacturer should have specifications on reflectivity. Mr. Nelson asked if there would be gaps between the landscaping. Mr. Stidham replied that the ordinance requires plantings to be in double-staggered rows. Mr. Tweedie said that cedars would be used on site and would be planted closer together to form a more effective visual screen.

Mr. Tweedie asked how they could gain approval of an alternate landscaping plan that would be determined in the field with Planning Staff. Mr. Stidham said that they would develop a special use permit condition to describe how the alternate plan would be approved by Staff. Mr. Tweedie asked if the members would be opposed to strictly cedars. Mr. Stidham suggested that the Applicant leave it up to their arborist to suggest the best native evergreen species.

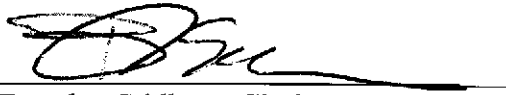
NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Stidham', written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Stidham, Clerk